



Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013
Leonardo da Vinci, Multilateral Projects Transfer of Innovation
PROMOTING NATURE BY TRAINING NATURE INTERPRETERS

NATURE AND LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION

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TEMPUS FUGIT

»The thieves of time were coming closer like a grey moving wall. One by one, stretching along the street, line by line, as far as one could see. Momo screamed but her voice could not be heard. She ran into the Never Street and stared in the army of grey men following her.«

Michael Ende, Momo

In a world of fantasy that is often not far away from today's real world, an army of grey men is trying to convince people to save time. In fact the people are being cheated; each moment they want to save is actually the moment that they did not live. In contrary to money, time cannot be saved. The more one tries to save time, the shorter become days and weeks.

Project activities turned into the second half. There is still a lot to do and the grey men must not cheat us. Therefore, do not save time when working on the project!

On the basis of the training curricula developed by the project partners and with support of potential trainers we continue with development of training materials. The draft curricula reflects a profile of a nature interpret who is a person with wide spectrum of knowledge, a master of communication and a friend of nature. Freeman Tilden says that skills can be learned. We believe that the curricula could be of a benefit for all who want to become good interprets. On the other hand it proves that an interdisciplinary approach is needed to raise awareness about environmental protection and healthy life style.



Preparing the curricula, December 2008

Nataša Moršič



Naturescience film

NATURE INTERPRETATION AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY – POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

We probably have all had an opportunity to watch on TV scenes from the world of animals or plants that we cannot or could hardly see with our eyes in the nature. Precisely planned and produced recordings of e.g. opening of a flower in the morning dawn, or a walk of an ant to the ant-hill reveals new dimensions that can be very special for the nature interpretation and the interpret. What would be the alternative to see the opening of the flower or a walk of this particular ant among thousands and thousands of others?

That is why digital technology has become a necessity allowing production of these useful materials. The nature interpret can use such recordings to present events that happened in a certain territory while the visitors were not around.

Digital technology offers many possibilities for improvement of the quality of nature interpretation and can contribute to the protection of natural and cultural heritage of a certain place. One needs to be aware that such recordings can only be produced if appropriate knowledge regarding nature and digital technology is present; however, patience and creativity is welcome, too. Digital technology can play an even more important role in interpreting nature to the people with special needs. There is an interesting challenge facing nature interpreters; namely how to use modern technology to enrich the contents of interpretation in the best possible way.

This also provides for new opportunities in education, improvement and development of nature interpreters. Development of digital technology is an endless story that in this context uses endlessness of the nature as a source to be imitated.

*Silva Nemeš,
Centre for health and development*



People with disabilities at Bukovnica Lake

PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL IMPAIRMENTS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE NATURE

Nowadays, the importance of one's mental and physical health and wellbeing is growing. A need of each person is to experience nature as it provides for the right balance that can happen even while listening of the birds singing, or watching the sunlight coming through the tree tops.

The Maslow's basic needs of persons with mental disabilities are identical to the needs of the most of people; it is only that these persons need temporary or permanent assistance in satisfying those needs. Some people are not able to express those needs; for that understanding, trust and help are needed. It is wrong to think that work is less demanding if capabilities of a person are lower. It actually requires a holistic approach and one has to be aware of the responsibility deriving from it. These persons can have deficiencies in perception, observation, visualisation, attention, orientation, memorising, or visual-motoric coordination. On the other hand they are not able to gain enough life experience due to several constraints, such as lower level of speech abilities, motoric difficulties, and also because the infrastructural equipment of many places is inappropriate.

Our approach to working with people with mental disabilities is based on provision of employment possibilities that are accompanied with relaxing and other activities that bring satisfaction. This is achieved by appropriate work methods; good motivation and well planned and adapted programmes and monitoring.

Our programmes already include several sport and relaxing activities that are implemented outdoor. In the nature the people experience peace, they relax and feel the life of other life beings, learn about vegetation, the people and their life styles, and above all they cultivate a respectful relationship to the nature. The nature allows us to learn from experience. It gives us opportunities to move, listen, feel, taste, try, form, compare, imitate, and to repeat it again and again. It allows us to think and to be wrong. The nature is important for our health.

Experience in nature enriches our lives. Such experiences will be remembered for a long time if we don't limit ourselves with questions like can I do it, am I safe, is this a proper thing to do.

Silva Felkar

Varstveno delovni center Murska Sobota



Learning about cultural and natural heritage



Polona Čeligoj Vida

SCOUTS INTERPRET NATURE SIMPLY BY BEING AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS

When Gregor asked me to present how scouts interpret nature to awaken and spread awareness for nature, human values, healthy life style and other virtuous life values, I immediately set my mind on Polonca Čeligoj.

Polona became a member of the Scouts Association of Slovenia already at the age of three, when she was passed the tradition from her parents who were also scouts. She has made an outstanding career since; she became a patrol leader at the age of twelve, 4 years later, as a group leader, she was also responsible for the implementation and coordination of their programme on the national level. Polona extended her field of work to educational sphere as well. At present she is the scout group leader of the scout group "Rod snežniških ruševcev" in Ilirska Bistrica.

The most part of the Scouts programme is performed outdoors, which practice provides best possible approach for children of all ages, from youngsters to teenagers, to learn about nature from nature. The young get first hand experience from nature; they see it, they smell it, they feel it and most important, they live it! So they simultaneously develop respect for it. To scouts, nature is a sports hall, a classroom and a home. Polona says: »We wake up in the morning dew and fall asleep in the warmth of a campfire. All that happens in between is pure romance.« Scout summer camps offer the adventure to practice theoretical knowledge gained during the year. A permanent contact with nature is promoted through various competitions, tours and walks. This is also where their motto »With Nature to a Better Person« comes from. Polona believes that the foundations of their successful education programme represents working in small groups – patrols, following scout regulations and respecting the scout oath, learning by working, their symbolic frame and personal promotion.

Polona explains that the education of scouts is based on values, such as tolerance, openness, solidarity, freedom and democracy, healthy life style, sustainable development, creativeness, volunteer-ship, equal opportunities, friendship, and honesty. All these values interrelated make their approach holistic. >



Scouts walk

To attract the young into scout movement in an era of »two cars in each house« and dominance of computers, mobiles and other contemporary tools, is a big challenge. Polona says that the young are difficult to motivate nowadays, but she is confident that the programme itself and the fact that it is implemented by young people, will prove to be the formula of success. »A young person who once was part of the scout organisation has got rich experience and contributes positively to the World«, says Polona.

Kristina Gorišek

ABOUT FOREST WE LEARN IN THE FOREST

Forestpedagogics is a relatively young science that in Slovenia has not been formally introduced yet. It is most advanced in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The objective of forestpedagogics is to encourage and upgrade knowledge about forests, nature and ecology. All activities should take place in a forest. »About forest we learn in a forest« is the motto of forestpedagogics. The activities are conducted under guidance of trained forest pedagogues. There are seminars organised to get trained and certified as a forest pedagogue.

A definition of forestpedagogics is the following:

»Forestpedagogics is teaching about non-economic aspects of forests. The learning process is based on direct and indirect perception and combines learning by doing, heart and brain. Foresters trained in forestpedagogics conduct guiding in the forest. Methods of experiential learning are used to teach about the function and importance of forests. Forestpedagogics is a tool used by foresters to make people acquainted with environment and emergence of life; this requires sound and responsible knowledge about forests.» (Source: Waldpaedagogik in Österreich, Botka and Moser, 2003).

To make people aware of the meaning of forests is an important mission of forestry. Foresters in Slovenia have been well aware of this mission; already in the seventies of the last century the first forest learning paths were developed. In 1974, two forest paths to Šmarnogorska grmada and Bistra pri Vrhniki were opened. >



Forest dwarf



Methods of interpretation have changed through time. In 1986, a seminar “Forest paths in Slovenia” was held in Radovljica. The participants discussed several challenges, such as how to pass knowledge to visitors in a less formal way and how to change the role of visitors from knowledge recipients to researchers who are guided in a subtle way to explore the wisdom of forests. Cooperation with the National Education Institute of Slovenia was initiated to ensure the quality of our work.

And today? Already from its foundation in 1994, the Slovenia Forest Service has been organising numerous activities similar to the ones practiced in other parts of Europe. Workshops, days of nature science, guiding through forests, guiding on learning paths, lectures, nature science camps, literary and painting contests, project weeks, classes held in forest classrooms, and others have been organised. In the beginning the activities were conducted in a classic way; however the contents and methods have been upgraded with experiential learning recently.

Foresters who know forests very well implement these activities. They have upgraded skills in experiential pedagogics at seminars of Josep Cornell and nature interpretation seminars. A lot has been achieved also through learning by doing. Each of us is well aware how important it is to perform the activities in a professional and responsible way but also with heart.

Unlike the neighbouring countries, there is no formal certified training in forestpedagogics available in Slovenia. It is our great wish and objective to introduce it.

*Hedvika JENČIČ, B. Eng. of Forestry
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At Kugy

THE TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK FOR ALL

Some years ago, Mr Igor Maher was a lecturer at our annual seminar for Ranger Service. He is a man in a wheelchair who intentionally visited public institutions at several places in Slovenia – banks, libraries, pharmacies, etc. I was surprised, almost shocked upon situations presented by Mr Maher. Stairs were almost everywhere; in the majority of cases they led right to the building entrance. I still remember one case, where a ramp was actually made, but getting there from a parking lot was not possible due to a kerbside put up in between. We were all impressed by that lecture, for me personally it made a click in my head. Things that the majority of people take for granted are in many cases not accessible to disabled people; this includes visits to nature. A wonderful view, a thousand-year old tree, a foxhole, or a monument are inaccessible as the path is too steep, the bridge is too narrow, ... Independence and freedom of choice are characteristic for all people, although the extent may vary. At home, at work, in a store, in nature; what may be obvious for the majority of people is often not possible for persons in wheelchairs, persons with locomotoric disorders, the blind and persons with visual imparity, the deaf, and other disabled persons.

Having all that in mind, we invited disabled persons to take part in a “TNP junior supervisor” programme in 2005. Positive results contributed to our decision to make a part of the Triglav National Park accessible to disabled people. Our strategy is focused on providing access to and adapting of the infrastructure at some locations of nature values and cultural heritage. A round table “Nature for all” was organised in 2006 as a kind of follow-up. One of the themes was dealing with barrier free planning and design and best practice examples were also presented. Until now access to the Kugy monument in Trenta and a viewpoint Šupca have been enabled. A folder “TNP for all” was produced; it includes a map and information concerning access and park infrastructure available for disabled people. Workshops about nature and in nature for the blind and visually impaired persons can be organised upon prior appointment. >



The Devil's bridge

We come from nature and nature is still deep in us although we are surrounded by concrete, tin and plastics. The green colour makes us calm down, rustling relaxes, chirping cheers up and the warmth and freshness invigorate us all! Keep the disabled in mind when planning – it does not always take special efforts, neither physical nor financial. Think before you make a stair!

The leaflet "TNP for all" and additional information is available on the TNP website: <http://www.tnp.si/doziviljati/C55/>

Marjeta Albinini

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